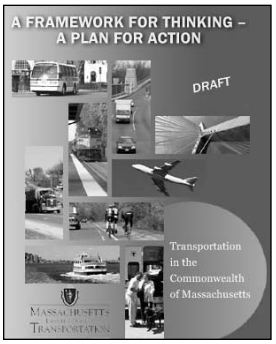
AUGUST 2005

TRANSREPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Public Comment Sought on State's 20-Year Transportation Plan



The Executive Office of Transportation is seeking input from the public on the state's draft long-range transportation plan, *A Framework for Thinking—A Plan for Action*. Six events have been scheduled for September for members of the public to learn more about this 20-year blueprint for the investment of nearly $31 billion in the commonwealth's road, bridge, and transit networks, and to provide feedback to EOT. Details on the two events that will be held in the Boston region (one on September 27 in Boston and the other on September 29 in Burlington) will be announced in the September issue of *TRANSREPORT*.

The draft plan highlights statewide priorities while recognizing the priorities of each of the 13 MPO regions in the state, including those set forth in the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2004–2025 Regional Transportation Plan. It emphasizes system preservation, objective decision-making, and multimodal mobility. Since funding for transportation projects is never sufficient to meet demand, EOT expects that *A Framework for Thinking* will start the conversation that will help transportation agencies identify and invest in those projects that will best promote a healthy,

■ Statewide Plan *cont. on p. 4*

Congress Approves Transportation Funding Package, SAFETEA-LU

After more than two years of negotiation and numerous extensions of the previous transportation legislation, TEA-21, the United States Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) on July 29. The bill, which passed with votes of 412 to 8 in the House and 91 to 4 in the Senate, authorizes $286.5 billion in transportation spending through September 30, 2009. President Bush is expected to sign the bill into law later this month.

More details on the contents of the bill, such as earmarked funding for high-priority projects in the Boston Region MPO area, the anticipated increase in planning funds, and other program initiatives, will be reported in the September issue of *TRANSREPORT*.

Central Artery/Tunnel Project News: Leverett Circle Detour Begins; Slurry Wall Repair Plan Approved

A major overhaul of Leverett Circle is temporarily necessitating significant changes on Storrow Drive eastbound and on McGrath/O'Brien Highway (Route 28). Work crews began reconstruction of Leverett Circle in early July. The work requires closure of the left-turn lanes from Storrow Drive eastbound to McGrath/O'Brien Highway. Motorists wishing to get to McGrath/O'Brien are being detoured along Martha Road and Nashua Street as they approach Leverett Circle. This detour will be in place for the rest of the summer.

As an alternative, drivers might want to consider accessing McGrath/O'Brien via Charles Circle, taking the Longfellow Bridge to Land Boulevard. Motorists starting out from Soldiers Field Road in Allston might consider taking the Massachusetts Turnpike to I-93 North and getting off at Exit 26.

The work at Leverett Circle has also required temporary removal of the overhead pedestrian walkway. Currently, pedestrians cross Storrow Drive and McGrath/O'Brien at signalized crosswalks. Signs guide pedestrians to the crosswalk locations.

■ CA/T Project News *cont. on p. 2*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

MPO activities update 2
Charlestown haul road report 2
Logan automated parking payment 3
USS *Salem* 3
Acela Express resumes service 3
Meeting calendar 4

The members of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): Executive Office of Transportation • City of Boston • City of Everett • City of Newton • City of Salem • Federal Highway Administration • Federal Transit Administration • Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority • Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board • Massachusetts Highway Department • Massachusetts Port Authority • Massachusetts Turnpike Authority • Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Regional Transportation Advisory Council • Town of Bedford • Town of Framingham • Town of Hopkinton

Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Activities

Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Action Items

The Boston Region MPO's Transportation Planning and Programming Committee endorsed an adjustment to the fiscal years 2005–2009 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on July 21 to reflect an update to the Central Artery/Tunnel Finance Plan and the current cash flow for the project. In addition, the funding category for the design of the South Bay Harbor Trail was changed from the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) Program to the Enhancement Program.

Regional Transportation Advisory Council Update

At the July meeting, members heard presentations from the MPO staff on the FYs 2006–2010 TIP, the FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and an amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan. Following a discussion of each of these documents, the Council voted to recommend their endorsement by the MPO. The Council looks forward to continued TIP-related discussions on the MBTA's Grant Anticipation Notes (GANs), the selection of projects for the CMAQ Program, and the process for determining project readiness.

On the agenda for the August meeting is a presentation by Somerville Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator Stephen Winslow entitled "The Somerville Community Path: Past, Present, and Future." See page 4 for meeting details.

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) Update

The recently elected AACT Executive Board has met and is in the process of developing program priorities for the upcoming year. Vice Chair April Maselli has temporarily assumed Jim Oliver's duties as chair while he is recuperating from recent surgery. The next AACT meeting will be on September 28. See the September issue of *TRANSreport* for details.

Comment Period Opens on Charlestown Haul Road/Rail Feasibility Study

The Massachusetts Port Authority has issued for public review and comment a feasibility study of the design alternatives and costs for constructing a haul road/rail corridor to serve the maritime industrial properties in and near the Mystic River Designated Port Area in Charlestown. The corridor alignment follows the existing Mystic River Branch rail right-of-way.

The study was prepared by Rizzo Associates under the direction of Massport and was funded by the Massachusetts Seaport Advisory Council and the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. It includes documentation and analysis of existing conditions along the right-of-way, a summary of current and future needs, and a presentation and evaluation of a series of corridor alternatives. Electronic or print copies of the study may be requested by contacting Denita Jordan at (617) 946-4490 or at djordan@massport.com. It also may be downloaded from Massport's Web site, www.massport.com.

The comment period on the document will close on Friday, September 30. Comments should be addressed to:

Andrew Hargens
Senior Planner/Project Manager
Economic Planning and Development Department
Massachusetts Port Authority
One Harborside Drive, Suite 2005
East Boston, MA 02128-2909

Slurry Wall Repair Plan Approved

■ CA/T Project News *cont. from p. 1*

In other CA/T news, the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority has approved a repair plan for the I-93 North slurry wall panel that suffered a breach last September. It has selected a procedure that involves anchoring one-inch-thick steel plates across the face of the panel to provide an additional watertight wall. The steel plates will be welded onto the tunnel's existing vertical I-beams, with horizontal steel crossbeams added to provide extra structural support. All the steel will then be grouted and encased in 10 inches of concrete, which will cover an area approximately 6 feet wide by 30 feet high. The plan is extremely conservative, as it essentially consists of building a totally redundant wall on top of the existing temporary fix.

The repair plan was developed by the engineering firm Simpson, Gumpertz, and Heger on behalf of contractor Modern Continental. It was thoroughly reviewed by Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff, Turnpike Authority engineers, and the Federal Highway Administration, as well as three independent engineering firms—Prototype Engineering, STS Consultants, and Lichtenstein Consulting Engineers.

The use of steel plates was chosen over another plan that would have entailed completely rebuilding the concrete slurry wall from inside the tunnel. Both projects are of the same order of magnitude, but rebuilding the wall was deemed to involve too many risks. For example, that plan would have required drawing down the water table approximately 70 feet in the surrounding area. This dewatering would present quantifiable risks to motorists, workers, and adjacent properties, such as the Federal Reserve Bank. Potential complications during dewatering include soil settlement that could affect nearby buildings and the possibility

■ CA/T Project News *cont. on p. 3*

Logan's Automated Parking Payment System Expanded

Massport has expanded its "Exit Express" system to include Logan Airport's Central Parking Garage. The automated payment system for parking, which is designed to get drivers in and out of Logan faster, was already in effect at the Terminal B Garage and Terminal E lots.

Under Exit Express, when customers are ready to return to their car from a terminal, they must first stop at a parking-payment station. Central Parking Pay Station kiosks are located near the elevator lobbies on walkway level 4. Terminals B and E Parking Pay Stations are located inside the terminals near the exit doors that are closest to the crosswalks.

When paying at the automated station (both credit card and cash are accepted), customers insert in the machine the ticket they received when originally entering the garage, and it is validated. They drive out of the garage via an "express" lane, inserting the validated ticket into the machine at the exit gate.

All users of the Logan parking facilities where Exit Express has been implemented are required to use the new system. For more information or to view a short video about Exit Express, visit www.massport.com/logan/parki_exite .html.

■ CA/T Project News *cont. from p. 2*

that a significant amount of soil or groundwater could flow into the tunnel, rendering it unsafe for use.

The cost of the repairs to the slurry wall panels will be borne entirely by the Central Artery/Tunnel Project's management consultant and the contractor, and the work will not impact the schedule of the CA/T Project. Substantial completion of the entire project is slated for this fall, with additional necessary tunnel finishing work to be done during already scheduled overnight restrictions or closures.

MBTA Leases Berth to USS *Salem*

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) has agreed to lease a berth at the Fore River Shipyard to the U.S. Naval Shipbuilding Museum, the nonprofit organization that operates a museum on the USS *Salem*. The *Salem* is already docked there; the agreement, reached after a yearlong negotiation process, allows the ship to remain at the shipyard for at least five more years. The museum will pay $1,000 monthly in rent, which will increase as its income grows.

The *Salem*, a 717-foot, 17,000-ton heavy cruiser, was built at the Fore River Shipyard by the Bethlehem Steel Company between 1943 and 1945. In her 10-year career, the *Salem* was the flagship of the Navy's Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean and of the Second Fleet in the Atlantic. As she served during Cold War years, the *Salem* was never in combat. She was decommissioned by the Navy in 1959 and sent to the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard to become part of the Atlantic Reserve Fleet. She was essentially mothballed there until she returned to the place of her birth 35 years later, in 1994.

Since that time, a number of political battles have occurred over the ship. In 2002, the previous landlord, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), attempted to evict the *Salem* from her berth prior to selling the shipyard to the MBTA. A plan to move the ship to Marina Bay prompted protests and was not carried out. Subsequently supporters, including some who lobbied for the original 1994 berthing, have spoken out. They see the *Salem* as a symbol of the role of the city and its residents in building warships that were crucial to victory in World War II, including the battleship *Massachusetts* and the destroyer *Joseph P. Kennedy Jr.*, both of which are now exhibited in Fall River.

The *Salem* is open seven days a week from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. For more information, call (617) 479-7900 or visit www.uss-salem.org.

Amtrak Resumes Acela Express Service

Amtrak resumed operating limited Acela Express service to and from Boston on July 23. The highly popular service was suspended on April 15 when cracks were discovered in many of the trains' brake rotors. The maker of the trains, Montreal-based Bombardier, has gradually been equipping the entire Acela fleet with new brakes, which will continue to be inspected as a regular part of the trains' maintenance cycle.

Currently, there are three round-trips operating between Boston and Washington. To maintain schedule predictability during the transition period, the returning Acela trainsets are making trips that have been operating with non-Acela trainsets since the high-speed service was suspended. After more Acela trainsets have returned to service, the schedule will be revised. Updates on the gradual restoration of Acela service over the coming months will be provided on www.amtrak.com.

Meeting Calendar

The public is welcome to attend the following transportation-related meetings. A photo ID is usually required for access to meeting sites.

At the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Thursday, August 4

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Work Session: Review of Comments on the Draft Fiscal Years 2006–2010 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and an Amendment to the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) — 10:00 A.M.
CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Immediately followed by:

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting: FYs 2005–2009 TIP Adjustment
CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, August 10

Regional Transportation Advisory Council — 3:00 P.M.
Conference Room 4

Thursday, August 11

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Meeting: Recommendation on MPO Approval of the FYs 2006–2010 TIP, the FY 2006 UPWP, and an Amendment to the 2004 RTP — 10:00 A.M.
Conference Rooms 2 and 3

Immediately followed by:

Boston Region MPO Meeting: Approval of the FYs 2006–2010 TIP, the FY 2006 UPWP, and an Amendment to the 2004 RTP
Conference Rooms 2 and 3

Monday, August 22

MBTA Rider Oversight Committee — 4:30 P.M.
Conference Rooms 1, 2, and 3

Thursday, September 1

Boston Region MPO Transportation Planning and Programming Committee Work Session — 10:00 A.M.
CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Call (617) 222-5179 for date

MBTA Board of Directors — 1:00 P.M.
Conference Rooms 2 and 3

At Other Boston Area Locations

Wednesday, August 3

MBTA Public Meeting: Silver Line Service between South Station and City Point — 6:30 P.M.
Tynan School
650 East Fourth Street, South Boston

Tuesday, August 9

Charles River Parks Citizens Advisory Committee: Site Visit to South Bank Portion of 29F Contract Area — 3:30 P.M.
Lovejoy Wharf
Beverly Way, Boston

Charles River Parks Citizens Advisory Committee — 4:00 P.M.
160 North Washington Street, Boston

Wednesday, August 10

MassHighway Public Hearing: Proposed Pulaski Boulevard Reconstruction — 7:00 P.M.
Bellingham Public Library
Community Room
100 Blackstone Street, Bellingham

Tuesday, August 30

MassHighway Public Hearing: Proposed Reconstruction of Somerville Avenue — 6:00 P.M.
Somerville City Hall
Aldermanic Chambers
93 Highland Avenue, Somerville

Meeting dates and times are subject to change: please call (617) 973-7119 for confirmation. Additional transportation meetings open to the public are listed on the Boston Region MPO Web site, www.bostonmpo.org.

■ Statewide Plan *cont. from p. 1*

sustainable, and prosperous future for the commonwealth's citizens and communities.

The public comment period for the draft document will close on September 30. It may be viewed at www.mass.gov/eot. Comments may be sent via U.S. mail to: Secretary John Cogliano, Executive Office of Transportation, State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Suite 3170, Boston, MA 02116. They may also be sent via e-mail to: longrangeplan.eot@state.ma.us.

The final document is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

TRANSREPORT

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